

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANTIA 06258 212101Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00
SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 SS-15 /045 W
-----068740 212106Z /15

O R 212019Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 228
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 6258

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, AR, CI
SUBJ: UNITAS EXERCISE

REF: STATE 211449

1. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, PRESENT PLANS FOR UNITAS TO CALL AT PUERTO WILLIAMS AND CONTINUE THROUGH THE BEAGLE CHANNEL ARE THE RESULT OF ARGENTINE INSISTENCE THAT EXERCISE FOLLOW THAT ROUTE. THE ORIGINAL CHILEAN IDEA HAD BEEN TO GO THROUGH THE STRAIT OF MAGELLAN. AT THIS POINT THE GOC, BOTH FOR REASONS OF PRIDE AND PERHAPS BECAUSE IT SEES SOME STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE FOR ITSELF, MAY BE UNWILLING TO GO BACK TO THE EARLIER PLAN. ON THE OTHER HAND, GOING DIRECTLY THROUGH THE STRAIT AND VISITING ONLY PUNTA ARENAS WOULD BE LESS EXPENSIVE AND TIME CONSUMING.

2. IN ANSWER TO SPECIFIC QUESTION REFTEL, WE SEE NO NEED TO CHANGE PRESENT PLANS SIMPLY BECAUSE UNITAS WILL BE GOING THROUGH "CONTENTIOUS BEAGLE CHANNEL AREA." BECAUSE OF THE BACKGROUND WE OBVIOUSLY WILL NOT BE THERE AS AN ACT OF FAVORITISM TOWARD CHILE. IF IN FACT THERE IS ANY CHANCE OF HOSTILITIES IN THE AREA, THE FACT OF UNITAS USING THAT ROUTE MAY ENSURE CONTINUED PEACE AT LEAST FOR THE DURATION.
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3. WE THINK WE SHOULD GO TO THE GOC ON THIS ISSUE, IF ONLY TO OFFER THEM A RETURN TO THE MAGELLAN STRAIT ROUTE THAT THEY HAD EARLIER PREFERRED. BEFORE DOING SO, HOWEVER, WE NEED TO KNOW WHETHER THE CONSOLIDATEDUSG POSITION IS ONE OF RELATIVE INDIFFERENCE (THE PROPOSAL OF THIS EMBASSY) OR WHETHER WE SHOULD STRONGLY ENCOURAGE DROPPING THE

CHANNEL IN FAVOR OF THE STRAIT.
GROVER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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